



The Switch Tower

Vol. 22 No. 2

April 2015

Seacoast Division NMRA www.seacoastnmra.org



Join the Fun at Quarterly "Events"

Seacoast Division Spring Event

Saturday April 11, 2015

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (4:00 PM)

Location: Rochester Community Center

150 Wakefield Street

Rochester, NH 03867

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Don Howd, MMR (1938-2015) Tribute

By Bruce Robinson

For those members in Seacoast Division NMRA who did not know Don, he was the builder of the Dividing Creek HO scale model railroad which occupied the entire basement of his home in Methuen, MA. Don's modeling was crisp, accurate and was often referred to as "eye candy". Don belonged to the B&M Operators for many years, hosted regular operating sessions and was a host for the annual Railrun "op-to-you-drop" weekend held in late March every year for the last 27 years. It is ironic that Don's recent passing came just four days prior to this year's event. Perhaps it was fitting but leaves emptiness to the event.

Where Don really shown in the hobby was his work as the Achievement Program Chairman for the HUB Division. I have had the pleasure of attending some of Don's presentations encouraging his fellow modelers to pursue the AP. He encouraged me by mailing plans of models that could be built for merit judging. I also had the opportunity to watch him judge AP applications for Electrical, Civil and Cars. His style was smooth, easy going, fair, but most importantly, he taught as he judged. His demeanor had a way to slowly draw you in and make you become a part of the process. Due to Don's gentle nudging, I have been working diligently on two AP categories hoping that I could complete them in time for him to judge my efforts. That didn't come to pass.

The HUB Division, many friends and this hobby have lost a true classic. I am honored to have known this man and benefited from his contributions to the modeling world. Rest in peace, Don.

(See pictures of Don Howd presenting awards on page 11)

Enjoy a trip through the [Seacoast Division's Web Site](http://www.seacoastnmra.org).

The President's Lantern by Erich Whitney

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Seacoast Division NMRA Board of Directors for electing me to serve as your president and Chip Faulter to serve as your vice president this year. At our January meeting, we elected Bill Poor as our newest director filling the vacancy when Rich Breton decided not to run for another term. I would like to echo Peter's sentiment in his fitting tribute to Rich. I would also like to thank Peter McKenney for his service to the division these past two years as president and I am grateful that both Peter and Chip have decided to stay on for another term.

I know it may seem funny to say this, but I would like to see more members run for office. Please don't misunderstand my comment--I am thankful that we have a full and engaged board. However, we elect three board members every year so that's three opportunities for someone to step forward and help bring new ideas, energy, and enthusiasm to our organization. Even if you don't want to hold an office, stepping forward to help in any capacity is a huge benefit.

Our division faces challenges exacerbated by our large geographical area and relatively small number of members. However, we have a significant number of incredibly talented and dedicated modelers among us. I think we have shown the value our division brings to the region and by extension to the NMRA these past few years. I also believe we can do more. We have recently partnered with the National Narrow Gauge Convention to offer our members another successful convention experience in September of 2016. This is a fantastic opportunity for us as this convention has already attracted the attention of NMRA President Charlie Getz. We will be reaching out to our members for help to bring layout tours and operating sessions as well as clinics to this convention.

As I write this letter on a cold March morning I am thinking about all of the model railroading events coming in April. My wife and daughter are teaching craftsman kit building at Derry Model Railroading Fun Night in Derry, NH, on Friday, April 10th and Friday May 8th. We received a generous donation of 30 kits from Brian and Jill Bollinger of BEST Trains and we are spreading the work over two sessions so that people don't feel the need to rush it. On Saturday, April 11th we have our Seacoast Division NMRA Spring meeting in Rochester and again we have a full clinic program for our members to enjoy along with our business meeting, show and ask, social time, and a layout tour. For those up for some travel, on Sunday, April 12th our friends in the HUB division are putting on their annual Spring TRAINING show in Taunton, Mass. Noted shelf layout author Lance Mindheim is their featured guest and yours truly is giving an updated JMRI/DCC technology clinic. Bill

Poor does a fantastic job keeping the website updated with content that's timely and relevant—please check it often and let us know of news and events we might have missed.

Recently John Doehring, NER Vice President and Coupler Editor, gave his Armchair Modeler presentation at the Derry Model Railroading Fun Night to a crowded room on a cold night. He shared with us the reasons he joined the NMRA and I found his message simple, powerful, and profound. It is not what the NMRA can do for you that should be the reason you join. You get out of this experience what you put into it. Each of us has our own strengths and weaknesses and by sharing our experiences we have the opportunity to learn from one another along our own journey through this fantastically complex, challenging and fun hobby. The more you engage with one another the more you strengthen your experience. While I respect a modeler's choice to not communicate with other modelers, I cannot help but think we must be missing connections to some modelers who just don't know we exist. How many opportunities are we missing to learn something new? I am asking each and every member who reads this letter to consider doing one thing to bring just one more modeler into our organization.

Please contact me or any of the directors through our website with questions or comments and I hope to see you soon.

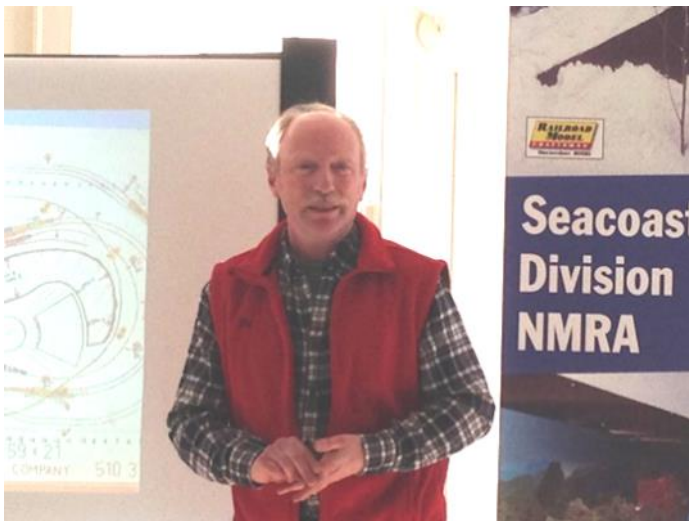
Erich Whitney



Record Number Attend Annual Meeting in South Portland



A record number of model railroaders attended the Annual Meeting of Seacoast Division NMRA on January 10, 2015, in S. Portland, Maine. Forty-seven members and guests signed in and were treated to a fresh clinic program with new presentations and techniques.



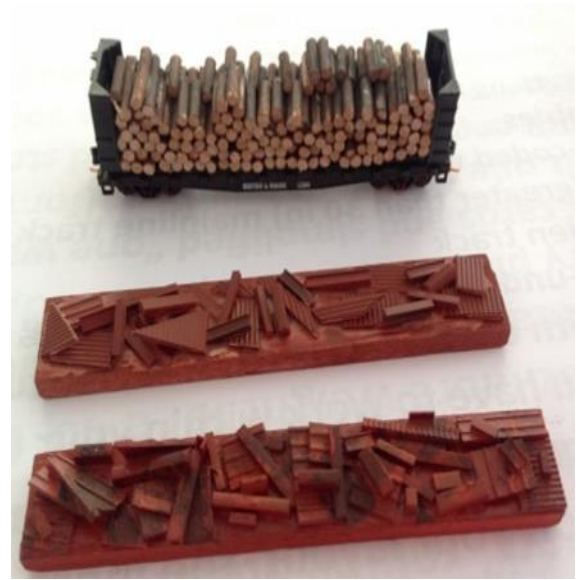
Ed Leslie, above, described the development of a large O-scale layout at Norm's O-Scale Trains in S. Casco, Maine. Then he showed how he had made "rock walls" for the layout using Bradgon Enterprises' Geodesic Foam Model Scenery System. The result of the process is a stronger, lighter, and more flexible material for installing on the layout. After the meeting, many attendees visited Norm's O-Scale where Ed and Brenda Leslie, as well as Norm Poulin, showed the layout under construction and many of the modeling materials and rolling stock available for purchase.



Four members presented their views and advice on modeling "standards" in different situations. Bill Gaver, right, talked about the development of the concept for the HO layout at the Wakefield Heritage Commission's railroad museum in Union, NH. Museums have a historic focus, naturally, but this one also has operations in mind. Larry Cannon explained NMRA standards for AP and contests, and where to find them. Chip Faulter explained the standards he developed for building his home layout based upon his circumstances. Based upon his experience, he also listed what his standards would be if he were to build another layout. Rich Breton has had deep experience in all three arenas of modelling and presented his observa-

tions and advice that drew the best practices from all of them. Feel free to contact any and all of these great modelers if you have questions about standards for you to use in your efforts.

2015 Annual Meeting Summary



Rob Selberg provided many examples of how to model open loads and he explained how to collect economical materials and make them. Rob models in N scale, yet his ideas and suggestions are helpful to modelers of all scales. His examples included pulpwood and scrap metal (above) as well as lumber, I-beams, limestone and pipe loads. Rob also belongs to MaiNe Track which is a modular group that attends train shows in New England. MaiNe Track is welcoming anyone who wishes to enjoy N scale modular activities.



Bill Poor gave two presentations, one on tips for creating a good Power Point presentation and the other on how to compress the files of digital images. Bill also serves as the webmaster and has posted many of the presentations given in the meetings to the Division's website. Bill also was elected by the members to a three-year term to the Board of Directors. Welcome to the Board, Bill!!

Show, Tell, and Ask is always a dynamic part of the program. At the Winter Meeting, Bob Bennett presented and explained his narrow gauge modeling project. Neil Falby talked about his MEC car project. Rick Mills described how to build model railroad track bumpers from inexpensive, readily available materials. Tom Oxnard showed how pictures can help build realistic structures for a layout. Participants also engaged in informal conversations about model railroading topics and some of them won door prizes. All engaged in "Sharing the Fun of Model Railroading."

Tribute to Rich Breton for His Services

The Seacoast Division NMRA gratefully acknowledges the leadership and service provided by **Rich Breton** over the past 15 years as a member of its Board of Directors. In his 30+ years in the NMRA, Rich has served as a Division Vice President, President, and Director, clinic presenter, representative of the Division at train shows, chair of various Division committees, instructor for outreach model railroad training programs, local resource for many aspiring model railroaders, Northeastern Region (NER) Area Director for Northern New England, and NER local convention chair and chair of outside activities.

Rich served as Vice President of Seacoast Division NMRA from 1999 to 2001 and as President from November, 2001 until January, 2008. Rich has served five three-year terms as a Director. During those years, the Division gained a substantial number of members as the NMRA adopted a uniform

membership policy at the national, regional and division levels. Rich planned and moderated the member and Board meetings as well as provided many modeling clinics and exhibits of good modeling practices. He chaired the 2005 NER convention held in Nashua, NH, served as Outside Activities Chair of the 2002 and 2013 NER conventions held in Portland, ME, and Laconia, NH. All of these NER conventions were profitable. Rich's design for convention layout tour guidebooks and their maps set a high standard for the Region and many of his ideas became part of the NER convention guidelines. From 2010 until 2014, he represented all NMRA members from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine as the Northern New England Area Director,

decisions that benefited all NMRA members in the Region. One major accomplishment was the adoption of a clear commitment by the NER to provide regular annual financial support to all active NER divisions.

Rich has given many excellent clinic presentations to Division members. He has spent substantial time preparing for each presentation with the interests of his audience in mind, taking time to organize the presentation and insert ample illustrations and photographs. At train shows, Rich would greet modelers at the Seacoast Division NMRA display table, populated with NMRA literature and materials as well as models of his favorite prototype railroad, the B&O, in five scales, and a Brio wooden car thrown in for the youngest enthusiasts.

Over the years, he also has taught a course called Introduction to Model Railroading in Plaistow, Rochester, and Wolfeboro, NH, along with other instructors from the Division. In the past few years, he has been a generous volunteer at



Union Station Museum in Wakefield, NH, helping build an historically accurate model of the B&M Railroad through that community.

Rich personifies the Division's values of informative, supportive, and participation. He spends much of his time teaching others, participating in Division activities, and giving support to other modelers. He regularly invites local NMRA members to visit his home layout and arranges opportunities for them to learn new skills. He created and lives up to the Seacoast Division NMRA slogan: **"Share the Fun of Model Railroading."**

Peter McKenney, President
January 10, 2015

Seacoast Division Spring Event Saturday April 11, 2015

Rochester Community Center 150 Wakefield St Rochester NH

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

All NMRA members and prospective members are invited.

Clinic Presentations:

Rich Breton: Model Railroading Workshop Tips and Techniques which can make things less of a challenge for many modelers. These are based on interactions with Rich's Wednesday and Friday model railroad workshop group sessions held in Rochester. Topics planned are: Grade crossing construction, windows / glazing installation, soldering aids & tips, decal application / correction (both wet slide and dry transfer), techniques used on small model detail parts construction, improvements on commercial structures, plus other useful hints and neat tools.

Dave Sias: Simple Animation Projects for your Model Railroad which will add some interesting attention grabbing features. Topics planned include, grade crossing gates, working semaphore installation, working switch-stands, and more.

Erich Whitney: Backdating an Existing Layout to an Early B&M RR Steam Operating Session. Modifications made to convert an existing well established diesel operating session into an earlier B&M steam operating session. This was done to complete some of the Chief Dispatcher AP requirements.

“Show and Tell” and “Show and Ask” Bring examples of your modeling to share with attendees and to ask questions on model railroad topics taking advantage of cumulative experience of group.

Social Time: Bring a snack or buy refreshments at several nearby vendors.

Board of Directors Meeting: 1:30 PM

Layout Tour: Immediately following meeting until 4 pm: Open house invitation to visit Rich Breton's HO scale Potomac Valley Railroad – B&O home layout located minutes away from the Rochester Community Center. Layout is 15 x 12" multilevel with a 12" staging extension, depicting the B&O RR in 1953 along the Potomac Valley in Maryland and West Virginia, with a logging branch line, Potomac Valley Railroad, into the Blue Ridge Mountains. Motive power is a mixture of steam, early diesel, with Shays on the logging branch line controlled by an early MRC Prodigy DCC system with some sound and special effects. A realistic yard, with locomotive facilities modeled loosely based on Cumberland, MD. Layout located in basement with stairway entrance in gar-

Maine Layout Tour Project Update by Peter McKenney

Seacoast Division NMRA members are heavily involved in organizing a layout tour program in Maine. They are working with people from 12 other model railroad organizations in Maine to plan a weekend of model layout tours targeted for September 18-20. The initial layout tour area will likely be in the general territory between Portland, Auburn, Augusta and Boothbay Harbor. Tours in other areas will be planned for later dates based upon experience from the initial tours. The tours will be free and self-guided, but are going to be limited to members of the co-sponsors and their guests in the first year in order to have a controlled group for gaining experience.

Currently, people are calling individuals whose names were provided by the co-sponsors in the territory of the intended initial tours to learn if they are interested in participating in a layout tour program, to get their contact information, and to ask if they have friends and neighbors who should be on the contact list, too. By this summer, the organizers hope to have a draft tour schedule. If you live in the defined initial tour area, or know some modelers who are located there, please pass on names and contact information. Currently working on the project from the Seacoast Division NMRA include: Tom Coulombe, Frank Knight, Rob Selberg, Art Mary, Ed Schultz, Chip

Faulter, Greg Ouellette, Bob Willard, Brenda Leslie, and Peter McKenney.

The 13 co-sponsors of the project, so far, are:

Boothbay Railway Village
Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club
Great Falls Model Railroad Club
Maine 3 Railers O-Gauge Model Railroad Club
Maine Garden Railway Society
Maine Model Works
Maine Narrow Gauge Club
MaiNe Track
Model Train & Slot Car Shop
Norm's O Scale Trains
Seacoast Division NMRA
Sheepscot Scale Products
Sn2 Crew

Maine Narrow Gauge Convention Update by Peter McKenney

Maine was the home from the 1870s to the 1940s of several unique and photogenic two-foot gauge railroads. Today the state has four excellent museums that preserve original Maine two-foot equipment and that operate prototype narrow gauge steam. It is this rich narrow gauge heritage that is bringing the 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention back to Maine in 2016. **Mark your calendars now for the event, September 7-10, 2016, at the Augusta Civic Center!**

National Narrow Gauge Conventions -- held annually since 1981 -- rank with NMRA National Conventions as one of the premier modeling events of the year. Narrow Gauge Conventions feature superb modeling clinics with techniques that can be applied to any gauge or scale, high quality modular layouts, tours of home layouts (both standard and narrow gauge), and a very large vendor area.

I urge everyone in the Division to keep the convention dates open and consider attending, even if for a day. I attended the 2007 NNGC held in Portland, Maine, and marveled at the excellent quality of the models and modules on display. Even if you do not model narrow gauge, you will enjoy yourself in seeing great examples of modeling, including at least 11 modular railroad setups from the US, Canada and the UK, as well as some fine local layouts to tour.

Members of Seacoast Division NMRA are working hard to help make the 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention in Augusta, Maine, a great success. Six members of the Seacoast Division NMRA have already made substantial efforts, and more members will be helping in the future.

Frank Knight is a Director and the Secretary of the Maine non-profit corporation formed to organize the convention. Frank has been busy this past year attending model railroad conventions and train shows publicizing the 2016 convention. Greg Ouellette has been designing award plaques and researching how to have them manufactured. Bob Willard is generating interest in narrow gauge modeling in the area in support of the convention including researching model layouts for the conventioners to tour. Peter McKenney has been the chief liaison between the Division and the organizers. He is leading the effort to find layouts to tour and also identify sites of potential interest to non-railfans who will accompany conventioners. Previously, he advocated for the Division to be a co-sponsor of the convention and research what needs to happen for the convention to benefit from the NMRA's liability insurance, a significant benefit if all requirements are met in 2016. Chip Faulter is working with Peter and Bob on layouts and non-railfan sites of interest. Erich Whitney has helped by securing video equipment from the Division as well as the Northeastern Region NMRA. These loaned items will save the convention significant rental fees.

The organizing committee plans to refund registration fees for those who volunteer at least four hours of their time for the convention, as well as those who give clinics or host layout tours. That means local NMRA members who support the convention can attend this great event at little or no cost.

Historically, NNGCs have generated profits. All proceeds of the convention will go to benefit narrow gauge preservation in Maine.

The protocol for the NNGC committees to follow is to open convention registration up AFTER the preceding convention closes. This year, the NNGC is in Houston, TX, September 2-5, 2015. After that date, monitor <http://nngc2016.org> which will commence publicizing many more details of the program. Also, after that date, Augusta area hotels will start to take reservations for those of you “from away” who would like to stay for more than a day.

NMRA President Charlie Getz will be in attendance at the convention. The Division will do its part to make Charlie and his wife feel welcome in our area and help him understand what the Division is doing to serve its members. We hope to introduce members of the Division to Charlie, too, who is a great spokesperson for the NMRA and its programs. All in all, this is a remarkable opportunity for NMRA members to have fun locally!!

Seacoast Division Engraved Name Tags now available

The Seacoast Division of the NMRA is now making available to members engraved name tags with up to three lines available, 25 characters per line. The badges will be \$5.00 per badge and \$3.50 for postage or you can wait and pick them up at a meeting of the division. Orders will be held until we have ten badges ordered. Badges included the attractive Seacoast division logo.

Please mail orders to Geoff Anthony PO Box 187 Blue Hill ME 04614 -0187

Make checks Payable to SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA
Please include your mailing address if you want it mailed.



Seacoast Division NMRA Engraved Name Tags Available

You may have up to three lines on your name tag. Badges will be at cost to Seacoast Division NMRA (currently \$5). If you wish the tag mailed to you, add \$3.50. Otherwise, your tag will be handed to you at the next regular Seacoast Division NMRA meeting that you attend. Orders will be submitted to engraver in batches of a minimum of 10.

First Line
Second Line
Third Line

[illegible]

Make check payable to:
Seacoast Division NMRA

Mail order form to:
Geoff Anthony
PO Box 187
Blue Hill, ME 04614

Send completed name tag to:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Dispatching with Friends by Erich Whitney

I have been a member of the NMRA for just seven short years but in that time I have found one of the most valuable benefits of getting involved in this wonderful hobby is meeting fellow model railroaders. While not all of them are themselves members of the NMRA, I can honestly say that one particular member makes the top of my list for helping this newbie discover the wonders of model railroading. Bruce Robinson, past president of the Seacoast Division NMRA, took me and my daughter Brenna under his wing shortly after I joined the NMRA and after many hours of operating on his Valley Junction Railroad (VJRR), hanging out together at train shows, his helping me put up walls in my basement, trips with him on the Sandown speeder, attending NER conventions together, and his enduring my endless questions, I think I can say we are friends. So, when I decided to embark on a quest to earn the NMRA Chief Dispatcher AP Certificate, it wasn't hard to come up with the idea to log my operating hours on Bruce's VJRR.

The requirements for this certificate include a number of hours of operating at various positions—Mainline Freight and Passenger, Wayfreight, Yard Master, Station Master, Hostler, Power Desk, Towerman, Traffic Master, Road Master, and finally Dispatcher. Specifically, you are required to participate in 50 hours total with 10 hours at a minimum in three of five categories, one of which must be Dispatcher. Bruce incorporates these requirements into his standard training program for the VJRR. Prospective crew members start out on the “Extra Board” taking trains as they are dispatched. This gets you started with mainline

freight and passenger service. It also gives you a look at the railroad as you “follow the iron” across the basement.

The VJRR is set in the era of 1955 to 1965. There's commuter service running with RDCs, a milk train, and express passenger service. There are local and through freights with many switching opportunities as well as a unit sand train. This railroad runs on a timetable and a 6:1 fast clock. Car movement is via waybills that are turned when the car reaches its destination. There are two main yards at each end of the layout, two staging areas, and an independent branch line with its own yard. Operating each of the two yards and the Valley Branch Line makes up the next operating slots that you need to operate. Once you master the various trains, the yards, and the branch line you are ready to sit in the dispatcher's chair.



It took me about 2 years of monthly operating sessions to put in enough time at each position on the VJRR to reach the dispatcher's desk. But when I got there I convinced myself I was ready and I have to say it was more fun than I thought! It was still nerve-racking, however. It's like your friend giving you the keys to his treasured sports car as he sits in the back seat while you take it for a spin. I was sitting in his dispatcher's chair and sending out crews on his railroad on his plan that has been running for 20 years!

Fast forward to last year. In 2014, I earned my Golden Spike Award and Association Volunteer AP Certificate, thanks in good part to my time on the Board of Directors of the Seacoast Division NMRA and the time I put into

chairing the Tracks to Lakeport 2013 NER NMRA Convention. I would be remiss if I didn't point out that it was Peter McKenney, my predecessor as Seacoast Division NMRA President, who strongly encouraged me to submit my Association Volunteer AP paperwork. That in mind, I set my sights on completing Chief Dispatcher and all I had to do was come up with the paperwork to complete the requirements. At this point Bruce encouraged me to adapt a plan to run on his railroad. It was intimidating enough to sit in the dispatcher's chair, but now he's telling me to use his railroad to run my own operating scheme on his VJRR!?!

This is what I would call one of those "no guts, no glory" moments. Bruce and I discussed some ideas and I gravitated towards the idea of rolling back the VJRR to the late 1940's. Brenna and I both love steam and I know Bruce has one special steam locomotive on the railroad so I ran

with that idea and came up with a story that put steam in service on the VJRR. It's one thing to come up with an operation plan, it's entirely another thing to actually run it. Technically speaking, you don't actually have to run the plan you come up with to meet the Chief Dispatcher AP requirements, but I thought that sounded like a lot of work without actually seeing it come to life. So, while I worked on creating the plan, I put out a call to the VJRR crew members to review their equipment rosters and let me know if they had the types of locomotives and cars I would need to make up my new trains. After a few iterations, I had the plan in place and a roster sufficient to run the plan. We set the date for the operating session, Saturday, January 17, 2015.

About two weeks before the session, I visited Bruce and we successfully tested several representative steam locomotives on the railroad. By this time, Bruce had moved into high gear with several of his own projects on his quest for the Master Builder-Structures AP Certificate. And he took this opportunity to work on his punch list of repairs and improvements to make sure the session would go off without a hitch. It was really inspiring to see Bruce get so excited about this project!

On that Saturday morning, I showed up at the Old Post Restaurant for breakfast with Bruce and we reviewed the

plan. Crew members started showing up by mid-morning and we staged the railroad for a 1PM start. We had more than the normal crew of 8 so we held the crew meeting over pizza at noon.

Our crew that day was Stan Ames, Fred Hessler, Paul Lessard, Dick Lord, Tom Oxnard, Bruce Reynolds, Jamie Robinson, Bruce Robinson,

Dave Sias, Bruce Stockdale, James VanBokkelen, and my wonderful daughter Brenna Whitney. I decided that I should be the dispatcher because I knew I would be responsible for any problems with the plan. The plan I created covered a full 24 hour schedule, much more than the 8 hours required for the certificate. We managed to complete about 10 hours of the schedule in the 4 wall clock hours we ran. I never thought we'd get that far!

Judging by the smiles and the laughter I think it's fair to say we all had a good time. I would like to encourage you to consider taking this approach to this AP certificate. I learned a tremendous deal about what it takes to make a railroad operational. More important I had an incredibly fun time dispatching with my friends.



The crew receiving pre-session instructions. Left to Right: Fred Hessler, Brenna Whitney, Dick Lord, Jamie Robinson, Tom Oxnard, Paul Lessard, Bruce Stockdale, and Erich Whitney. Hidden from view: Bruce Robinson, Dave Sias, James VanBokkelen, Bruce Reynolds, and Stan Ames

Achievement Program and "Judging" by Larry Cannon

I have received some feedback on my efforts as a Seacoast Division NMRA Achievement Program Coordinator. Much of the feedback has been positive, but there are people who see the AP as part of a competitive, "judged" environment that they wish wasn't present in the hobby. I do not know the individual histories for all that feel this way, but it may have been as a result of a negative experience. Steps have been taken to try to avoid those situations. **One key step was to change the word "judge" to "evaluate" which is the method used for AP – evaluation against a standard set of criteria and not against other models.**

I direct your attention to a particular page under the Education portion of the NMRA website. In the Contests section there is a "Code of Conduct" listed. <http://www.nmra.org/code-conduct> This code states the NMRA principles for evaluating a model for the AP or for conducting and entering an NMRA contest, which is where much of AP evaluation occurs. Very briefly, AP evaluators (and contest judges) are supposed to be objective, fair, helpful and instructive, and provide positive and constructive comments to all applicants or entrants. This code has been in place for approximately five years. "AP Judging Guidelines" for evaluating motive power, car, and structure models also appears on the Contests and AP sections as a separate tab and has been in use since 1996. <http://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/2006-judging-guidelines.pdf> In the very rare case that an applicant (AP evaluation) or entrant (contest) should encounter a gross exception to these principles, there is an appeals process and the exception should be reported to the AP Chairman, Contest Chairman, or Chief Judge conducting the contest. If it is in a non-contest AP evaluation, the report would go to the Regional AP Chairman.

The purpose of the AP is for modelers to individually compare themselves against a standard, not each other, and to learn and display a variety of knowledge and skills. In effect, sticking to your own levels of comfort in the hobby may not be sufficient to be recognized, and moving out side "your box" is encouraged. Part of the AP certification process is having your work evaluated and this can be done with or without entering a contest.

My personal experience was that the challenges, while a chore at times, did not make me feel very uncomfortable and I did learn things from areas I might otherwise have continued to avoid. I made the decision not to avoid any of the program, earning all the eleven certificates, of which only six required evaluation. I am glad I did because I have a greater appreciation for more parts of our hobby.

In those areas that are evaluated in the AP, attaining 70% or higher (87.5 points) of the possible points (125) is required to earn a Merit Award. Before people compare this to academic grading and discount the program, please realize that extremely few models score in the vicinity of the 125 maximum possible points and this includes national contests where some of the best models in the hobby appear.

In the AP process, if your evaluated model does not earn at least 87.5 points, you have the opportunity to rework the model and have it evaluated again with the improvements. This means that a model with correctable deficiencies stands a chance of attaining the points required for a Merit Award. The program goal is to have people improve their skills.

Evaluation against a defined set of criteria is the method used to gauge a modeler's skills. If you do not wish to compete against other modelers, you may have your models evaluated outside of a contest. If you like the motivation of a contest to spur your modeling efforts, you have the option to enter your models in a contest to be judged. In either case, there are principles and guidelines to help you learn from the experience and become a modeler with better and broader skills while having a positive experience. Try it and see for yourself.

New AP Awards by Larry Cannon



Achievement Program Co-coordinator—Maine Larry Cannon (left) presents Chip Faulter (right) with his Association Volunteer certificate .

2015 Achievement Program Awards continued



Rick Mills (Left photo) with his Golden Spike Award. In 2014, Seacoast Division NMRA members earned more AP certificates than any of the other 10 active divisions of the Northeastern Region. Interest in the Achievement Program has been building during the past couple of years and more awards are anticipated this year.



Achievement Program Coordinator– New Hampshire Tom Oxnard (right) presents Erich Whitney (left) with his Association Volunteer certificate. Volunteerism in the Seacoast Division NMRA has risen noticeably in the past couple of years, starting with the Division's successful effort to host Tracks to Lakeport 2013, the Northeastern Region convention. Erich chaired that convention and was elected president of the division by the Board of Directors after the Annual Meeting of the members. Hopefully, even more members will find ways to volunteer and ultimately earn an AP certificate.

Don Howd, MMR, Remembered



Left photo: Don Howd on left congratulating Gerald Abegg on earning MMR; Right photo: Don Howd on left awarding Bruce Norris AP certificates.



Modeling Minutes by Erich Whitney

Do you ever feel like you never have enough time to model? Between a full time job in engineering management, being a father of two teenage children, assistant scoutmaster in my son's Boy Scout troop, trying to make it to football games to watch my daughter march, my son's cross country meets, work on our rail trail, and trying to be a good husband, I find it a bit challenging to make progress on my modeling. Also, it's an unfortunate personality flaw that I like to do things start to finish and it bothers me to no end having to stop part way through something. For the longest time, I struggled with this trying to make progress on my models. My solution to this dilemma is what I've come to call, "Modeling Minutes".

I am fortunate to have a dedicated work area in the basement where I can setup a project and leave it out between work sessions. But what's critical to making this work isn't anything you can buy or build. The key to making this work is a change in my attitude towards taking time to model. My commute to and from work is about an hour—this is when I plan things in my head. I think about the current project or projects on my list and I work through the mental exercise to plan what I need to get or the steps I need to line up to finish a task. I think about upcoming train shows and plan what I might need to look for or whether or not I have to stop at Home Depot, Staples, or the Dollar Store to pick up supplies. Do I have to plan a stop at Northeast in Methuen, Maine Trains in Chelmsford, Hobby Town in Manchester, or is it something I need to find online. I'm already on the road so I might as well have a plan.

Believe it or not, there are a lot of spare minutes in my schedule I just had to learn to capitalize on them. When I have a little more time, I use it to plan and stage a project such that when I have an opportunity to do some work, I'm not wasting all that time cleaning or looking for things. Then I break up the task into bits of time such that things like glue or paint drying occurs while I'm busy with other things. If I'm building a kit, for example, I complete a step in the instructions and I don't proceed to the next step unless I know I can finish it in the time I have left. I mark the stopping point in the instructions and resume from there the next time.

If this idea is driving you nuts because you're bothered by the thought of having to stop and go, I hope I have encouraged you to at least give this some thought if not actually trying it out for yourself. It's not ideal but it beats not getting things done. If this sounds too hectic for you, I can

sympathize but I will tell you that I feel a whole lot better making some progress instead of waiting for weeks to find an entire day's worth of time to spend in the basement—it just never happens which makes me feel bad and it becomes a vicious cycle. Moreover, I really do get to enjoy the benefits that modeling gives me in terms of doing something for myself once in a while. I used this technique a lot over this past year and in that time I've made significant progress on my modules, earned my Golden Spike AP Award, and installed decoders into several locomotives. It didn't happen quickly but it happened and that's what counts.

Scratch Building Hickory Hills Dairy By Tom Oxnard

As I grow my town of Ashland in upstate New Hampshire, I have always wanted to build a dairy as a valuable industry that serviced the cities and towns of New England. I created space on my 18 inch shelf by removing the back 5 tracks of a previous storage yard. That gave me plenty of room. I looked at as many dairies and creameries as I could find in kits, and in pictures on the internet. I ended up deciding to scratch build a dairy very similar to Millett Creamery by South River Model Works. The main difference is that the center structure is clapboard and not stucco. This would fit my space well.

I first drew plans and drafted elevations of the 4 walls on graph paper. The dimensions are partly determined by the size of the windows and doors that I had available or would purchase. I have included the drawing of one wall that includes the list of windows and doors. These are from Tichy and Northeastern Scale Lumber. My walls are 1/16 inch clapboard and styrene brick sheet from N Scale Architect. I collected all my materials before starting the project.

I planned on making the building in 4 parts. The center structure is made from 1/16 inch clapboard sheet and measures 24' by 33'. Each wall is laid out, all windows and doors are cut out, and the walls are braced with 1/8 inch by 1/8 inch stock. I spray the walls with a standard gray primer, and then with a standard flat white. I then lightly placed nail holes with a pounce, and gave it a wash of India ink. The 6/6 Tichy windows were masonry, so I had to add 1" by 6" styrene trim boards that I had already painted gray.

Hickory Hills Dairy continued

I made the roof from .040" styrene and used 3M Transfer Tape to attach shingles painted Earth, and tarpaper painted Grimey Black or gray. It was then weathered with chalk.

There is a small dormer and window added. The top clerestory is a delicate structure made from clapboard sheet that can easily break before bracing and built in the same way with 1/16 inch corners. The windows are NESL 4/4 glued together with .04x.10 styrene between each window. Make your full six-window unit

first to get the dimensions before cutting the clapboard. The trim boards and rafters are 2"x6". The inside of the clerestory is painted Engine Black. The foundation is a frame made of .040" styrene. Some old Campbell rock wall sheet is then glued onto the frame. I attached it to the wood structure with Walthers Goo.

The left side building is 22'x24' and is made from styrene. I started by making 4 walls from .040" styrene. The walls go all the way to the ground. I first had to create these unique windows, starting with Tichy 6/6 masonry window #8154. I cut a row of 3 panes from one window and glued it to the top of another after building up the frame with 2"x6" and 1"x4" styrene. Once I had my overall window dimension I was able to cut the windows out of the walls. I then glued the 4 walls together, braced with styrene.

I then added the outer shell to the structure on the 3 sides. The bottom 2 feet of foundation is N Scale Architect Textured Block styrene sheet. The walls are the brick sheet which I glued in place. It is good to take care at the corners so that the rows of brick line up. I then cut out the windows and doors from this brick layer. There is an interesting arched detail above each window that I drew in

pencil. I cut out this outer layer of brick with an X-acto knife, leaving the .040" styrene inner layer. I painted all the brick Poly Scale Zinc Chrome Primer and for mortar used a

wash of rust and white in 70% alcohol. I used Gap Filling CA to fill all the small light holes around the masonry windows and painted the upper arch white.

The roof is made from styrene. The metal corrugated roof is held on with Transfer Tape. The clerestory is built the same way as before and painted Engine

Black on the inside. Rafters are white 2"x6". I added a .040" base to the building to keep it square and rigid and painted the floor Poly Scale Earth. A view block and some interior details were placed, but it is not lighted.

The right side building is an interesting combination of wood and brick, using both prior construction techniques. It is 22' x 33' overall. Most of this building is styrene, with a wood clapboard upper portion. Start by building the .040" styrene structure following your drafted plans with your precise dimensions. The front styrene portion has no windows, so you then add the brick sheet to it. The back portion has windows and door, so those must be cut be-

fore adding the brick veneer. The same foundation veneer was added. When the 2 styrene parts were complete they were glued together. I painted the brick Zinc Chrome Primer, washed it with mortar, and added a few accent colors to different bricks.

I then made the front clapboard wall, cut out the windows, added bracing, primed gray, sprayed white, added the end trim boards, and windows. The two other clapboard walls have no windows. My wood braces extended down onto the styrene, and were glued in place with Goo. The roof is styrene covered in tarpaper and weathered with chalk.



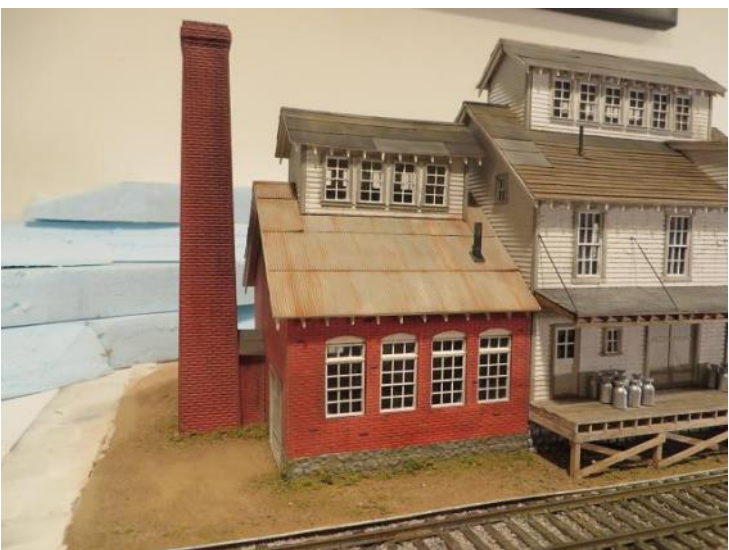
The Switch Tower

Rafters are 2"x6". A styrene floor was added and painted Earth.

The large roof vents for this section are scratch built. The mid tapered section is carved from balsa wood. This sits on top of a .020" styrene square, and a balsa box below. The top small metal vent is from Bar Mills. All the parts are glued with epoxy, and then painted Floquil Old Silver. Other smaller roof vents are styrene tubes, some on a styrene base.



I glued the three sections together with Goo because it is styrene against wood. I placed this completed building on a .040" styrene base.



The fourth section is a small office addition. It is the same wood clapboard construction with a shed roof. The front windows are two NESL windows trimmed and glued together. The addition should be designed to fit under the gable end of the previous section. It sits on 1/16 inch posts. The small office deck is made with a 4"x8" frame, 2"x6" joists, and 2"x8" deck planks. Stairs are Central Valley, and rail-

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ings are 4x4" posts, and 2x6" rails.

Other loading docks are the same 4x8" frames with 2x8" joists (18" OC), and the same decking. The one in back is Z shaped. I designed it and built it in one piece to make it structurally stronger. All the unpainted wood parts have an India ink wash only.

To make the water tank start by finding a cardboard tube the suitable size. A wooden dowel could also be used. I



found a tube with the outside diameter slightly smaller than 1 inch. I cut this to 9.5 feet tall. I made a base platform 10x10' with 2x8" planks glued to 2x6" joists (18" OC). There is a 4x4" beam at the low end to make it horizontal. The tank boards (2x6") are stained different colors



before cutting several dozen to 9.5 feet. I scribed vertical lines onto the tank and glued on the boards. The tank roof is cut from sturdy paper. Cut out a circle larger than the tank diameter. Cut a line along one radius. Then overlap the cut edges to the desired roof slope and glue together.

The Switch Tower

Glue it onto the tank. I then divided the roof into 16 equal wedges, cut 16 wedges of paper to size and glued them onto the roof. When dry I used a pair of scissors to cut the eaves evenly. I made a hatch of .020" styrene, and painted the roof Grimey Black. I added a peak ornament from the scrap box. I then added the 16 rafter ends (2x6").

I used 28gauge wire for the tank hoops. I drilled #75 holes into the tank to hold the wire in place, and made the ends



overlap suggesting a turnbuckle. Some CA was also used. The wire and tank are weathered with some rust.

The loading dock canopy is made with 2x6" rafters glued on to 4x4", 18" OC. The roof is wood with tarpaper. The supports are .012" brass wire.

The chimney is made from the same .040" styrene. It is 40 feet high, 6x6' at the bottom, and 4x4' at the top. I cut 4 tapered sides, 2 slightly narrower to keep the same dimensions on each side. I then put the same brick veneer on the surface. The top brick design is made from 6 rows of brick, covered with 3 rows of brick. The top is covered with .040" styrene. It is painted with the same Zinc Chrome Primer, the mortar wash, and black chalk. The small connection from the chimney to the building is 8' high, 4' wide, and 2' long.

This seems to be a complex and challenging structure, but like any building it can be constructed more easily if you separate it into its different parts. Drawing and drafting your building ahead of time helps you analyze and plan the construction. You can create the size, design, and details that you want to make your building as unique or complex as you wish.

Fun Ops in Meredith May 9 2015!! Join Us Now!

Seacoast Division NMRA has expanded its popular realistic layout operations program held annually in Meredith, NH. This year, up to 20 operating slots will be available on a first come, first served basis. Everyone will have a chance to operate on two super home layouts, one in the morning and a second one in the afternoon. All layouts are HO and use DCC. There is no charge for this program. If you have not operated on a layout before, or very little, do not worry. This program is intended to minimize stress and maximize FUN. The hosts and the other operators are helpful and friendly. If you are an experienced operator, great! You can take on stimulating assignments and also enjoy yourself. Plus, everyone gets to see good modeling examples and "talk trains" with supportive people. Bring a friend, too. Submit your names now!

May 9, 2015 from 9:30 am until 4:30 pm

B&M Zealand Valley Div. (HO), Bruce Reynolds, Meredith, NH

The layout is set in the 1950's and is based on the B&M branch running from Concord to Woodsville with the modeled portion being the Lakeport to Plym-

outh/Lincoln section. Local switching and through trains utilize car card waybills. NCE DCC.

Boston & Maine RR, Dave Sias, Meredith, NH
The layout is based on the B&M branch running from Concord to Woodsville, NH in the 1940's and up to 1954. Point to point operations for freight and passenger trains using operating semaphore signals. Freight car movement utilizes car card waybills. NCE DCC.

Boston & Maine RR, Concord, NH, Harry Decker, Holderness, NH

Centered in Concord, NH, the layout concentrates on operations in the Concord area with both freight and passenger trains coming through. Much switching of freight and passenger cars. NCE DCC. Mostly sound locos; Car card waybills for freight.

Registering is EASY-PEASY: Call or email Dave Sias, 603-279-4553; lnsias@gmail.com.

Do not get shut out!! Call Dave now!!

There will be a lunch break from 12:30 until 1:30. To maximize operating time, bring your own lunch. Alternatively, there are food vendors in the area.

Terrapin Station At Portland Flower Show by Sam Carr

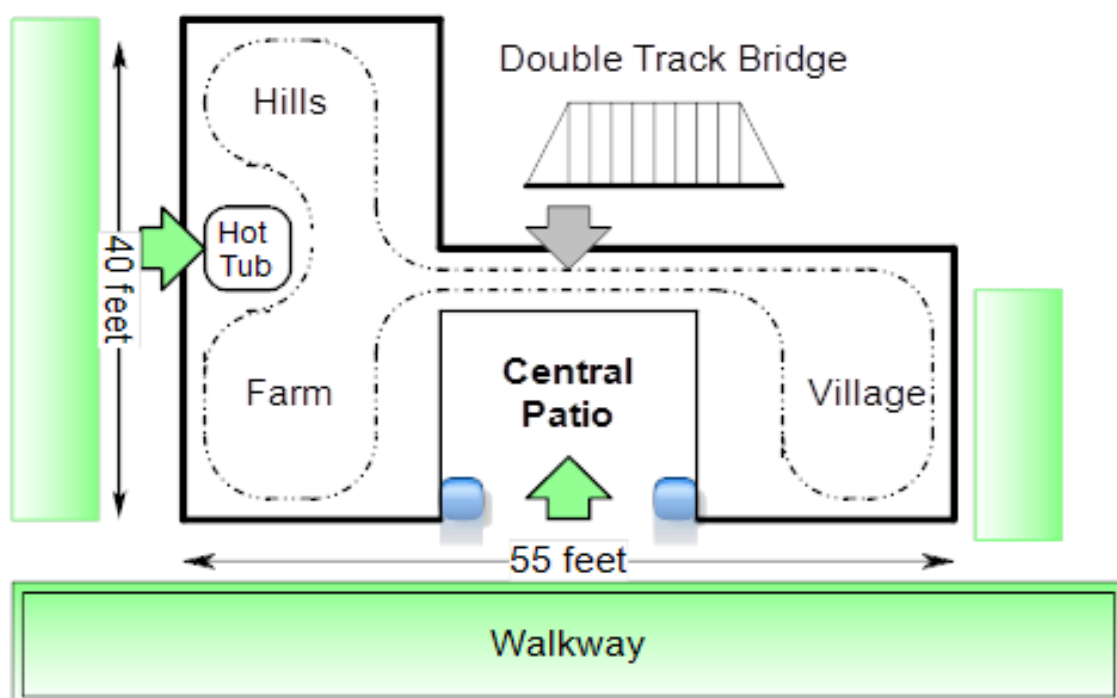
Terrapin Station was seen by over 9,000 visitors at the 2015 Flower Show in Portland, Maine. It had 21 different species of plants and was part of the floral competition. Richard Young from the Maine Garden Railway Society has been bringing trains to the Flower Show for the last four years. For this event he was offered a larger space at short notice. He chose a typical back yard with a scenic garden railway. There is a central patio with comfortable furniture and a Big Green Egg for grilling & cooking. One corner has a working hot tub on a patio with a small bar. The garden railway wraps around the central patio through a village, farm and hills. The most frequent train was the Amtrak Genesis with four passenger cars. It looks like the Amtrak Downeaster, well known by sight and whistle to children of all ages in Southern Maine.

The 350' of track was powered by BridgeWerks Magnum 15-SRM Controller and their UR-15 Remote Control. Motive power is an Amtrak Genesis with Zimo sound card and rolling stock is four Amfleet coaches. The bridge is a 20' kit from Carl Wedekman. Construction began with placing paving blocks upright in the track pattern shown above. Then the central and hot tub patios were laid, followed by landscape fabric

outside the patio areas. Twelve cubic yards of mulch were used to fill the layout. Next the rail bed was ballasted so track could be laid, connected and powered. Finally, the outside border was done with about a ton of rock. Trees, plants, and flowers go in the day before opening, once the loading doors are closed and heat turned on.

The creation of this display from decision to opening in a single week was made possible by exhibitors who generously provided materials for Terrapin Station. They include hardscape from Blue Rock Stone Center, a hot tub and Big Green Egg ceramic cooker from Mainely Tubs, and trees from O'Donal's Nursery Garden Center. Paul Corbett, another member of the Maine Garden Railway Society, provided the buildings and figures that helped bring the layout to life. Thankfully some of his buildings were not buried under all the snow here! A time lapse video of the setup of the 2015 Portland, Maine Flower Show can be seen at <http://www.pressherald.com/media/video/time-lapse-setting-portland-flower-show/> Terrapin Station appears in the top of the overhead camera shots.

Terrapin Station Back Yard Garden Railway at the 2015 Flower Show in Portland, Maine

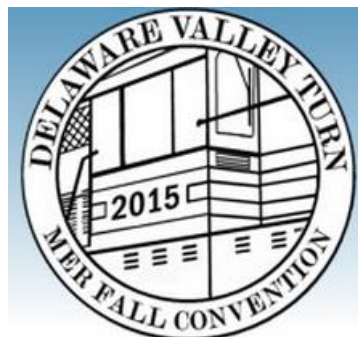


Editor's Rambling Thoughts

A Reminder to members of the Seacoast Division NMRA that the Northeastern Region has combined with the Mid-East Region for the Fall Convention this year. This would be a great alternative for those who can not attend the national in Portland, OR. Check out the web site listed below. I looked at the activities and thought this will be a great event to attend and I hope to be there. They are looking for volunteers and presenters of clinics. If you're looking to get involved this is a great opportunity.

The Switch Tower can only be as good as the material it contains. So this is a call for all members to help with the content by writing an article. It does not have to be long or fancy and pictures are an added plus but not necessary. We are not looking for the next best-seller, just a small project or thought. Hope to hear from you soon. Geoff Anthony

Photo below by Harry Gordon, Greenville Station 3-29-15. FMI, go to www.greenvilledepot.org to learn about efforts to preserve the historic station building.



October 22-25, 2015
Mount Laurel, NJ
www.delawarevalleyturn.org

Timetable

April 10	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
April 11	Seacoast Division Quarterly Meeting	Rochester NH
April 12	Spring Training Hub Div Show	Taunton MA
April 18	Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Show	Haverhill NH
April 19	Dartmouth/ Lake Sunapee Show	Sutton NH
April 25	Great Falls Topsham Show	Topsham ME
April 26	Hooksett Lions Club Show	Hooksett NH
May 9	Fun Ops in Meredith	Meredith , NH
June 12	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH

Always check the Division's Calendar of Events on its website for more details and events.

New Members

Devyn Campbell, Boothbay Harbor, ME
 Robert Carignan, Portland, ME
 Heath Carignan, Portland, ME
 Ken Moller, Brunswick, ME
 George Allen, Rochester, NH



<http://www.nmra2015portland.org/>



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The Switch Tower is the quarterly publication of the Seacoast Division NMRA. Past issues can be down loaded from <http://seacoastnmra.org>. Contributions of articles and other content are welcome and encouraged. Email them to editor@seacoastnmra.org 30 days or more prior to the one of the publication dates (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1)



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